



UPDATE

Montana Department of Commerce

Chester, Glasgow, Miles City & Pondera County Projects Awarded

The Valley Event Center in Glasgow, Conrad's Pondera County Museum, Liberty Village Arts Center & Gallery in Chester and Miles City's Custer County Art & Heritage Center have been awarded a total of \$200,000 from the Department of Commerce's Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program (TIIP) "bed tax" grant funds to assist in the completion of tourism-related facility improvements.

Montana Department of Commerce Director Mark Simonich approved the TIIP grant funding for the four tourism-related projects following recommendations from the Montana Promotion Division staff and the state's Tourism Advisory Council. The four TIIP grant recipients were selected from 27 applications submitted to the Commerce Department.

Below is a summary of the TIIP Grant Award, the sponsor and how they will use the funds.

- **\$48,360 Custer County Art & Heritage Center, Pump House Renovation (Miles City):** Renovation of the historic Municipal Waterworks building that houses the art museum to expand exhibit space and repair the roof, windows and doors (shown below).
- **\$109,740 HiLine Youth Hockey Association, Inc., Valley Event Center (Glasgow):** Complete construction of the \$1.1 million Valley Event Center in Glasgow to serve as a multi-use facility for youth hockey as well as

local and regional events and activities for residents and visitors.

- **\$20,500 Liberty Village Arts Center & Gallery, Roof & Siding Project (Chester):** Place new roofing and siding on former St. Mary's Catholic Church building which serves as the community's art center and gallery facility.

- **\$21,400 Pondera History Association, Pondera County Museum (Conrad):** Renovate museum building to create space for a Transportation Exhibit Area. Renovations include building and finishing walls, insulation, electrical, ventilation and replacing/removing some existing structures.

Since 1995, TIIP grants have provided more than \$2 million in tourism "bed tax" funds to 44 projects in 32 Montana communities. During that period, TIIP grants have assisted in the development of \$24 million in tourism-related projects.

International FAM Tour Group Hosted

The state of Montana hosted nearly 50 European travel professionals during the annual Rocky Mountain International Mega Familiarization tour October 5-8, 2004.

The tour brought together tour operators and travel agents from Germany, the UK, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, France and Italy, beginning in Kalispell and ending in Rapid City, S.D.

As one of the largest international tourism marketing efforts of the year for Montana and South Dakota, the tour gives these select travel professionals a first-hand look at some of the West's best attractions.

Pam Gosink, marketing program manager for Travel Montana/Department of Commerce hosted the group during visits to Glacier National Park, Helena, Virginia City, Nevada City, Livingston, Billings, Hardin, and the Little Bighorn Battlefield National

Monument. The group continued the tour through parts of South Dakota.

"We give our European guests a taste of the many outstanding destinations that Montana has to offer," Gosink said. "By experiencing the region they are able to sell it more effectively."

Scott Balyo, director of marketing for RMI, echoed Gosink's comments. "The RMI region is an attractive destination for Europeans," he said. "With more and more international guests discovering the wide-open spaces, Native American culture, wildlife, recreation and scenic vistas, the Mega Fam gives our states a chance to show off some of the places that make them so unique."

Special Events Grant Program Funds Available

Montana communities, organizations and tribal governments sponsoring or planning ongoing annual events are invited to apply for \$50,000 in state tourism "bed tax" grant funds available from the Montana Department of Commerce, Promotion Division's Special Events Grant Program (SEGP). The SEGP application deadline is January 14, 2005.

Events established prior to May 30, 2002 are not eligible for funding under the program. Grants will be awarded based on a 3-tier approach that ranks counties on the basis of lowest per capita income, slowest population growth and highest unemployment. The grants are designed to be matching funds for non-profit organizations involved in developing new annual ongoing events.

For more information about the SEGP, or to request an application, contact Carol Crockett at 406-841-2796 or e-mail: ccrockett@state.mt.us. SEGP application materials can be downloaded from the Intranet: www.travelmontana.state.mt.us.



Warm Hospitality on Cold Winter Days

Are you prepared to be a good host to our winter visitors? When it's cold outside... warm hospitality is the cure!

Envision all of your staff understanding why visitors are coming to Montana and your business, knowing what they are looking for when they arrive and extending a welcome that will ensure repeat visits.

Montana Superhost
Visitor Friendly

This vision becomes reality after a Montana Superhost! customer service training seminar. They are prepared to bring this reality to your business and/or community—just give them a call!

Each seminar is 3 hours in length, and incorporates research data from the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research at the U of M, highlights the Montana Lewis and Clark Signature events starting in summer 2005, discusses attractions in your community and teaches key customer service principles applicable to your business. Your staff will also gain a deeper understanding of the economic impact of Montana's tourism industry.

"It's very expensive to go buy a new customer," says Jay Robson, general manager at Dollar Rent-a-Car in Missoula. "The repeat customer is a gift." Give that gift to your business by preparing your staff to host your next visitors! For information on Montana Superhost! training, contact Jodi Smith at 406-756-3674 or superhost@fvcc.edu.

Seasons of Change

Crisp mornings and fresh snow on the mountain peaks signal a change of seasons for Big Sky Country. Travel Montana is also experiencing its own changes, saying farewell to Ric Bourie, Publicity Manager, and Frankie Niemeir, Administrative Assistant to the Division Administrator. Ric is returning to Massachusetts, while Frankie is "moving on to bigger adventures." The Promotion Division is pleased to announce the addition of Susan Albrecht as Marketing Assistant to the marketing staff. If the name sounds familiar, it should: she served as Publications/Publicity Assistant



Susan Albrecht

at Travel Montana for almost four years, followed by a stint as Executive Director of Yellowstone Country. She also developed and taught "The Backyard Tourist" adult ed class in Bozeman.

Film Office News

2004 is shaping up to be an interesting year for film production in Montana, with print ads and still shoots up 31% over last year. So far, seventeen still shoots, ten commercials and ten television programs have utilized Montana locations. Montana continues to be a favored location for independent feature films, with this year's credits including *Don't Come Knocking* (Butte), *Steal Me* (Livingston) and *Montana 1933* (Livingston, Bozeman).

The Montana Film Office is again a sponsor of the AFI FEST in Los Angeles, CA, to be

held November 4-14. In their efforts to reach independent filmmakers, the Montana Film Office (as part of the Film The West marketing co-op,) will co-host a reception for filmmakers at a Kodak Connect event.

Fording the Mighty Mo

MSNBC selected the Missouri River as one of their "Great Escapes," where the uncharted is mapped, the unknown described and the great affair is movement itself. In September, a crew of four traced the Missouri from its source in the mountains of Montana near Yellowstone National Park to its confluence with the Mississippi River, a distance of 2,315 miles. The journey is featured on MSNBC, with some 20 million viewers a month, and on MSN, with more than 80 million homepage impressions per month. The Montana Promotion Division, along with several Montana businesses, helped sponsor the Montana portion of this digital travel adventure. To view the program, log onto www.visitmt.com, then click on features and extras.

Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided to disabled persons on request.

Calendar of Events

November

- 10/31- Visit USA Trade Show in Naples, Italy
- 11/5
- 4-7 Montana Film Rendezvous, Livingston, MT
- 6-12 World Travel Market Trade Show, London, UK

For all of the latest Montana tourism industry information log on to:
travelmontana.state.mt.us



Travel Montana • Montana Film Office
Montana Department of Commerce

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